

William Anastasi

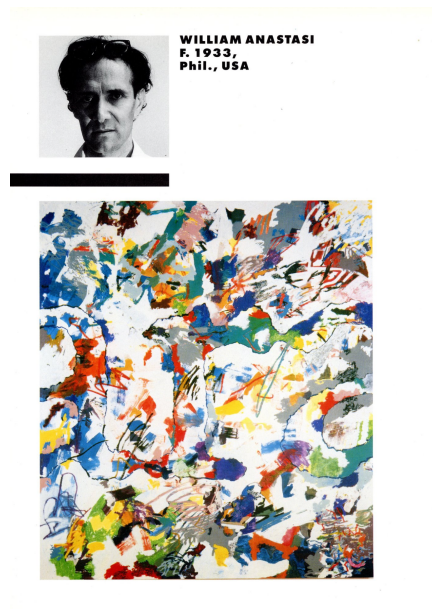
Stalke Galleri
Admiralgade 22, Copenhagen:
8.4.to 7.5.1988

The connection, which suddenly arose in the question, is for the doubting grasping and poetic in a way that perhaps is the trembling alien. The devout Catholic James Joyce seems in his work to have repeated the process in reverse sequence – foresight and context in *Stephen Hero* and *Dubliners*, which ultimately give way to the anarchistic in *Finnegans Wake*. Here, he avoided at least being accused of having certain presumptions. The wild beauty struck me when I was about 20 years old – approximately 10 years before I consciously began creating art. The painting series "ababab" was produced half-blind. The title is an abbreviation of "ababababoldhargothatkammniaronkronkronbrotnnonrenrontunnthuntravorhunownowtoohhohoordenenthrunuk." Each painting is an excerpt from Joyce's words for the eternal noise in *Finnegans Wake*. There his sound effect for the worker's fall from silence, the angels' fall from Paradise, and everyone's fall from grace is, as we tend to put it, a scream. According to Irish tradition, it is the scream that accompanies a person's departure into death, God's silence. This silence also seems particularly gripping to atheists.

William Anastasi. January 8, 1987.



Exhibition view of William Anastasi's bababab at Stalke Galleri, 1988



William Anastasi's first exhibition at Stalke Galleri in 1988 was mentioned in Politiken by Øystein Hjort, who framed the presentation through the relationship between painting, sound, and language.

The exhibition focused on a series of paintings based on fragments and sequences inspired by James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Rather than functioning as conventional narrative images, the works were described as visual equivalents of sound—broken progressions in which meaning emerges through rhythm, repetition, and interruption. The overall pictorial sequence is divided into smaller units, shifting attention from the totality to the individual painted fields.

Hjort pointed to Anastasi's background in minimalism and conceptual art, noting how this experience informs a restrained yet complex visual language. Reference was made to the artist's so-called "blind drawings" and to his interest in working beyond conscious control, allowing chance, material logic, and bodily process to play a decisive role.

Within this context, painting was described as a poetic metaphor for sound: forms and colors tighten and loosen, fill and empty themselves, creating a visual rhythm rather than a fixed image. The exhibition highlighted Anastasi's ability to unite conceptual rigor with an open, sensuous painterly practice, positioning the works in a field between abstraction, language, and perception.

The mention in Politiken can be read as an early introduction of William Anastasi's practice to a Danish audience and underscores Stalke Galleri's role in presenting international artists whose work operates between conceptual thinking and material experimentation.

